

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 DODE-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 H-02

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 049771

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:MASS, KE, US

SUBJECT: REUTER'S ARTICLE ON U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO
KENYA

REF: STATE 43819

1) REUTER'S DOD-BASED CORRESPONDENT CALLED DEPTOFF FEB.
27, STATING HE HAD BEEN REQUESTED BY REUTERS REPRESENTA-
TIVE IN NAIROBI TO CONFIRM FACT THAT GOK TEAM HAD BEEN
HERE TO DISCUSS MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND THAT KENYA WAS
GOING TO BUY F-5E AIRCRAFT. DEPTOFF SAID TEAM WAS HERE TO
DISCUSS MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN GENERAL AND TO OBTAIN
FACTS AND FIGURES ON VARIOUS KINDS EQUIPMENT. IT HAD MADE
NO DECISION WITH RESPECT TO EQUIPMENT GOK WISHED TO ACQUIRE
FROM U.S. IN ATTEMPT DEFLECT CORRESPONDENT'S INTEREST
FROM F-5E (IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXPRESSED WISH OF GOK DELE-
GATION TO KEEP GOK INTEREST IN F-5E FROM PUBLIC EYE AS
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LONG AS POSSIBLE AND AS MINIMUM UNTIL ACTUAL ORDER PLACED),

DEPTOFF REMINDED CORRESPONDENT OF PRESS STORIES LAST AUGUST WHICH INACCURATELY STATED THAT GOK WAS GOING TO BUY USED F-5A'S.

2) FY 1977 FIGURES ON FMS CREDITS (\$5 MILLION PROGRAMMED FOR KENYA) HAVE BEEN IN PUBLIC DOMAIN SINCE FEB. 20 (REFTEL)

AND CORRESPONDENT USED THIS FIGURE. DEPTOFF DID NOT RPT NOT MENTION FIGURE OF \$10 MILLION FMS CREDITS FOR FY 1977 DISCUSSED WITH GOK DELEGATION, WHICH DEPT, OF COURSE, CONTINUES USE AS PLANNING FIGURE. SINCE CORRESPONDENT DID NOT MENTION \$5 MILLION IN FY 1975 FMS CREDITS WHICH GOK ALREADY HAS, DEPTOFF DID NOT BRING IT UP.

3) RESULTANT REUTER'S ARTICLE DATED FEB. 27, STATES THAT USG WILL ASK CONGRESS APPROVE \$5 MILLION IN FMS CREDIT TO KENYA IN FY 1977. ARTICLE POINTS OUT THAT KENYA THIS YEAR RECEIVED \$2 MILLION IN FMS CREDITS "LESS THAN HALF THE AMOUNT PROPOSED FOR THE 1977 FINANCIAL YEAR". IT CONTINUES: "THE (GOVERNMENT) SOURCES SAID THAT A KENYAN FACT-FINDING TEAM WHICH VISITED THE U.S. LAST WEEK EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN AMERICAN ANTI-TANK RECOIL-LESS RIFLES AND SECOND-HAND NORTHROP F-5A FIGHTERS. KENYA TURNED TO THE U.S. FOR ITS MILITARY REQUIREMENTS WHEN BRITAIN MADE IT CLEAR IT WAS UNABLE TO OFFER ANY LONG-TERM LOANS TO PURCHASE BRITISH EQUIPMENT. THE NAIROBI GOVERNMENT NOW HAS ONLY FOUR UNUSABLE BRITISH-BUILT HAWKER HUNTER FIGHTERS. KENYA HAD SOUGHT UNSUCCESSFULLY LAST FALL TO PURCHASE OLDER NORTHROP F-5A FIGHTERS FROM IRAN AT ABOUT \$100,000 EACH. IRAN HOWEVER DECIDED TO KEEP ITS PLANES, AND THE SOURCES SAID THE U.S. HAS BEEN UNABLE TO FIND ANY OTHER COUNTRY WILLING TO SELL ITS OLD F-5A'S TO KENYA. U.S. OFFICIALS FEEL THAT KENYA AT THIS TIME HAS NEITHER THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES NOR THE TECHNICAL CAPABILITY TO BUY THE MORE SOPHISTICATED AND EXPENSIVE NEW F-5E INTERNATIONAL FIGHTER, WHICH COSTS UP TO \$5 MILLION PER PLANE, THE SOURCES SAID. MUCH OF THE U.S. CREDIT MONEY WILL PROBABLY BE SPENT ON TRAINING FACILITIES AND INSTRUCTION OF KENYA'S ARMED FORCES, THEY ADDED".

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4) ARTICLE HAS NOT YET BEEN PICKED UP BY U.S. PRESS. IF KENYA PRESS RUNS STORY AND EMBASSY QUERIED BY GOK OFFICIALS INFORMATION PARAGRAPH 1) ABOVE MAY BE USED TO EXPLAIN BACKGROUND. STATEMENT THAT "U.S. OFFICIALS FEEL THAT KENYA AT THIS TIME HAS NEITHER THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES NOR THE TECHNICAL CAPABILITY TO BUY THE MORE SOPHISTICATED AND EXPENSIVE NEW F-5E . . ." DOES NOT RPT NOT OF COURSE REFLECT THE OFFICIAL U.S. POSITION, AS GOK DELE-

GATION KNOWS FROM ITS RECENT DISCUSSIONS HERE. AGAIN, SUCH STATEMENT MADE TO DEFLECT ATTENTION FROM F-5E'S. ALSO FMS CREDITS WILL BE SPENT AS KENYA DESIRES (PRESUMABLY ON EQUIPMENT) AND NOT, AS ARTICLE STATES, ON TRAINING FACILITIES AND INSTRUCTION OF KENYA'S ARMED FORCES.

5) IT IS OUR HOPE THAT STORY WILL DIE, BUT IF ASKED SPECIFICALLY ABOUT GOK INTEREST IN F-5E, WE WILL STATE THAT F-5E WAS ONE OF NUMBER OF TYPES OF EQUIPMENT DISCUSSED WITH GOK DELEGATION. AS EXPLAINED TO DELEGATION, IF LETTER OF OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE IS PREPARED FOR F-5E AIRCRAFT, IT MUST, UNDER EXISTING STATUTES (SEC. 36(B) OF FOREIGN MILITARY SALES ACT), BE SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS PRIOR TO PRESENTATION TO GOK FOR FINAL SIGNATURE. IT WOULD THUS ENTER PUBLIC DOMAIN. MORE QUESTIONS AND PRESS INTEREST RE KENYAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM COULD BE EXPECTED AT THAT POINT. INGERSOLL

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